



ISSN: 3085-6434

DOI:

<https://doi.org/10.71263/m8wy4j71>

PHILOSOPHICAL EDUCATION IN HANNAH ARENDT: Philosophical reading as a therapeutic in the midst of the crisis

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Taking as a presupposition what Hannah Arendt reflected on what she called "The crisis in education", this work aims to discuss the possibility of responding to the problem of the crisis using philosophical reading as a therapeutic tool for such confrontation. It starts from the observation that the contemporary educational crisis requires not only methods, but

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a reconnection with the meaning of teaching, understanding and belonging to a common world. At the same time, point out the dual role of the teacher as responsible for leading the student to the enjoyment of the world, as well as for the world itself, of which he is representative in the educational process and for which he must be responsible.

Arendt understands the reality of education from the apparently antagonistic concepts "new" and "old", which instead of canceling each other out as dual extremes, mutually sustain each other, because it is in the legacy of the old that the new is built at birth and development; As for the old, it sustains its continuity in the new, because it is the new that saves it "from the ruin that would be inevitable were it not for the renewal and the coming of the young and the young" (Arendt, 2016, p. 247).

In the midst of this apparent conflict, the school can be understood as a place of mediation. The role of mediation is up to the teacher.

He is the mediator of the introduction of the learner into a world that was already structured before his arrival, because he takes care that the new does not lose its capacity for estrangement from the old world and that for him is new, while he sustains in *the old* what is substantial to him so that he is

what he is in the face of the harassment of the *new* that arrives.

The task of mediating "world" and "new" clashes with a crisis that has taken place in education itself and that has as its basic assumptions, as Arendt points out (2016, p. 229–234) three elements: the existence of an autonomous world of the child, the decline of authority, and the pragmatic view that effective learning is only possible if there is a substitution of knowledge for doing.

The first element is to presuppose that there is an "autonomous world of the child". It is the forced insertion of children in a space whose real and natural relations between adults and children is suspended, extinguishing teaching itself, especially because childhood, which is an internship, is transformed into a category of purpose. In this way, the mediating function of the educator is no longer necessary, since the purpose is not to educate, which in its etymological root means *to lead* outwards to the real world, but to maintain, as far as possible, the existence of the artificial world of the child.

Arendt brought as a second assumption the crisis of the *authority* of the one who is one of those responsible for education. The teacher is no longer asked to know the subject that will be taught. He is emancipated and now he needs to master only the techniques of teaching, the

methods of how to teach. Their education ceased to be in a "subject" and became a formation in "teaching". With a focus on technique and without mastery of the content, the failure of authority is, as much as it is not desired, a present element, and it is exactly for this reason that pragmatism shakes education even more strongly.

Authority in Arendt should not be confused with authoritarianism. Authority is the ability to make oneself heard (*ob-audire*) by others, but which is not reduced to the simple practice of persuasion (*péithein*) nor to the use of force and violence (*bía*). Yet, "since authority always demands obedience, it is commonly mistaken for some form of power or violence" (Arendt, 2016, p. 129), but when such means are employed, it is the sign that "authority itself has failed" (Arendt, 2016, p. 129). It is by fleeing from authentic authority that space is opened for authoritarianism to invade with its own violence.

The replacement of the teacher who has *authority* by the mere *facilitator* aims to sustain the vision that pragmatic pedagogy, the *third assumption of the crisis*, has inserted in education.

Pragmatism refers to the transformation of education into a mere doing, which necessarily leads to the transformation of man into a reified figure and with his value

reduced only to the capacity to produce, given that the reflection of the "I" itself becomes dispensable and any conceptual ordering about a "who am I?" becomes a presentation of the social role that this "I" plays in the world.

With this, the belief is established in education that only what is experienced is what is learned. Such a view is a confirmation of the decline of the very sense of education, which should safeguard in itself the act of making use of the experience of others to revisit old issues or raise new questions today, because individual action is based on collective capital, and thanks to language, the knowledge acquired is transmitted from one person to another, from one generation to the next.

In order to reach the fruition of the world as it is, it must be preserved as a traditional place — the trader's space — for the transmission of what is old without being outdated. It is the "Ariadne's thread" that leads to the civilizing element and that allows communication between the past and the present.

In the midst of the crisis, the philosophical reading of the classroom needs to be assumed from what Nussbaum (2022) understands it as being the *therapeutic use of Philosophy*.

The task of conceptual transport between the past and the present, between what was said there and what is understood here, needs care, because

questions such as: "what do we refer to when we say something?" or "what do we mean when we say something?" need to be clarified so that the dialogue is effective between reader and author, between philosopher and world, always taking into account that when something is expressed, this "something" is already loaded by morally defined concepts.

In medicine, when one wishes to apply some medicine to a certain patient, it is necessary to listen to their complaints about their current condition; in the therapeutic process of Philosophy in the classroom, in the same way, it is necessary for the student to manifest his "condition". And here one of the problems of the practice of philosophical reading as a therapeutic path is already presented: students, even those of the same circumstances, are not necessarily in the same condition. And here "condition" is not limited only to cognition, but to one's own ability to recognize one's *apathy* towards existence and the possibility of requesting therapy that is useful to one.

As with a doctor, the teacher is also required to have skillful expertise in collaborating in the discovery of the student's condition.

The ability to recognize and help the student is affective and is closely linked to the ideas of

authority and responsibility. It is authority because it is not found purely and simply in the technical-methodological approach, but, mastering its environment of meaning, its discipline, it can offer itself as a key figure in the rescue. At the same time, it is responsibility, because it does not close itself in selfishness, but, possessing a double aspect of protection, it longs to protect the child against the world and the world against the harassment of the new that is introduced to him.

The idea of philosophical reading that is intended to be achieved with the work in the classroom is not reduced, therefore, to the simple access to the text, but also to the insertion of the student in a tradition that is alive. However, it is only possible for the master to introduce the student to the living tradition if he is imbued with it (Cf. Porta, 2014, p. 101). For Severino (2009, p. 4) "When we start thinking, we depend on a whole thought experience practiced and accumulated even before we are born."

The need for an awareness of responsibility towards those who arrive in the world, but also the responsibility for fidelity in presenting the "old world" to newcomers is a fundamental task, and this is what Arendt affirms when she shouts that "anyone who refuses to assume a collective responsibility for the world should not have

children, and it is necessary to prohibit them from taking part in their education" (Arendt, 2016, p. 239). In a context of crisis, the educator who does not question himself about what he says and how he says it runs the risk of transforming teaching into automatism without listening or direction.

A meaningful philosophical reading is a philosophy of the present, which always takes into account that it is not detached from reality, and that it is always between the past and the future.

Seen as a task of rooting in the past, philosophical reading offers three elements necessary for overcoming the crisis. Faced with the problem of creating an autonomous world of the child, it is a link with the world of adults, the real world, as a narrative of the trajectory of the living in history. By accessing the texts, the teacher can also allow himself to be formed by tradition, as if by a guiding thread until the actual event, and this act is the vindication of his authority. In the face of pragmatism, the text is not just a tool, but the content itself. It is the element that rescues the world for being content and the new for being able to update its reading.

In this sense, philosophical reading offers a mode of resistance in the face of the collapse of meaning promoted by the crisis. It restores density to the act of

educating and restores intergenerational dialogue as the basis of tradition.

In an attempt to overcome the crisis, it is not disregarded that the *crisis* itself is for Philosophy a unique moment of *decision*, since knowing how to *split*, to *separate*, is a fundamental task for philosophical thinking, almost in a dialectical process of separation to understand the part and synthesis to relocate the part in the whole that is reality.

Keywords: Philosophical Reading, Crisis in Education, Therapeutics, Responsibility.

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Submitted April 2025

Approved in May 2025

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